

REMARKS

Claims 1-9, 13, 15-38 and 59-63 are pending in the present application.

Claims 24 and 63 are amended herein.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17, 19 and 21 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte(US 4,883,642) in view of Turner et al. (US 5,958,345).

Bisconte is cited as disclosing a ribbon of material which includes a plurality of microwells for holding a plurality of samples to be analyzed by an automatic device. The Office states that the instant claims differ from Bisconte by reciting that the plurality of microwells on the web material are formed by a bottom surface and an upstanding surface wherein the bottom surface and upstanding surface are of different hydrophilicity. Applicant agrees with the position of the Office regarding the failure of Bisconte to teach these critical elements.

Turner et al. is cited as disclosing that it is known to form microwells using concave impressions (the wells of Bisconte) but that these are easily torn or punctured. The

Office then opines that it would have been obvious to utilize the coating method of Turner et al. to avoid the difficulties associated with Bisconte.

Applicants respectfully submit that the teachings of Turner et al. are taken out of context and that combining the teachings of Bisconte and Turner et al. would only be considered in hindsight based on teachings of the present invention. It is well settled law that one must find motivation within the references for the combination to be usable for rejecting filed claims and the motivation must come from the cited references themselves not by hindsight reconstruction based on the instant claims. In the present case there is a lack of motivation for combining the references except for that provided in hindsight from the present application. The rejection is therefore improper.

Applicants further submit that the teachings of Bisconte and Turner et al. are incongruent. Even if one did rely on hindsight reconstruction they would be led in a direction contrary to the present invention.

Bisconte is specific to a sample holder as set forth by the Office. This is not merely a holder for observation, as alluded

to by the Office, but is instead a holder suitable for holding, processing, storing and analyzing biological samples. One need look no further than the title to determine that merely holding a sample is not sufficient. The sample has microwells which are molded into the substrate in a size and manner sufficient to allow reactions to be undertaken and studied. (col. 3 lines 8-10) In contrast, Turner et al. is specific to a thin film sample support for x-ray fluorescence analysis.

The Office has opined that Turner et al. discloses the wells of Bisconte with reference to col. 2 lines 64-67 for such teachings. Turner et al. does not refer to Bisconte or a sample holder even close to Bisconte. Instead, Turner et al. refers to his own U.S. Pat. No. 5,544,218 (Turner II) which is submitted herewith in an Information Disclosure Statement. Turner et al. teaches against the use of concave impressions due to their propensity to be easily torn or punctured and therefore leads one to avoid using any impression.

Assuming, *arguendo*, that one completely ignored a portion of the teachings of Turner et al. while, at the same time, attempting to incorporate the hydrophilic/hydrophobic aspects taught therein they would, first of all, expect the wells to be

weak which is undesirable. This would lead in a direction contrary to the teachings of Bisconte. Regardless of that they would be expected to form coatings which have less than about 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{cm}^2$ of the polymer of choice. (col. 3 lines 56-69) Assuming that the coating is the preferred polyimide at a density of about 1.4 g/cm^3 the coating thickness would be less than about 0.35 μm . Certainly, one of skill in the art would not attempt to do combinatorial experiments is such a small volume. If one then attempted to build thicker layers in a hindsight effort to form the claimed invention they would be in direct contradiction with Turner et al. since this would render the material inferior for x-ray fluorescence studies. It is therefore physically impossible to combine the teachings of Bisconte and Turner et al. without contradicting the teachings of one, or both, references. Even in hindsight, one would not combine these references and arrive at the claimed invention or even a usable device.

Bisconte teaches a well of sufficient size to allow treatment and study of biological samples wherein the well is sufficient to allow introduction of lyophilizing pads and still have sufficient room to be able to cover the well with a film.

(col. 9 lines 10-41). Turner et al. teaches formation of multiple layers with each layer being less than about 0.35 μm thick. One of skill in the art would not attempt to incorporate the layers of Turner et al. into the material of Bisconte since the ability to do combinatorial reactions would be eliminated. Conversely, one would not develop thick layers using the teachings of Turner et al. since the use as a holder for x-ray fluorescence would be compromised if not eliminated. This combination, even in hindsight, would be avoided due to the failure of the product to act as a combinatorial substrate or as a holder for x-ray fluorescence. The rejection based on this hindsight reconstruction is therefore improper and withdrawal is respectfully requested.

The hydrophilic/hydrophobic properties of Turner et al. are intended to optimize solvent evaporation which is contrary to the intent of Bisconte et al. One of skill in the art would not consider using a substrate designed to optimize evaporation of the solvent for use in a combinatorial coating where reactant concentrations are critical. The only motivation for combining these contradictory teachings is a hindsight reconstruction

based on the teachings of the present invention which are novel and non-obvious.

The rejection of independent claims 1, 16, 19 and 21 is improperly based on a hindsight combination of Bisconte and Turner et al. Furthermore, even in hindsight, the combination of Bisonte and Turner et al. would lead one of skill in the art away from the claimed invention. For these reasons, and those already of record, claims 1, 16, 19 and 21 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al.

Claim 3 depends on claim 1 and is patentable for, at least, the same reasons as claim 1. Turner et al. fails to teach a microwell and especially fails to recite a bottom of the microwell. The Office states that Turner et al. teaches plasma treatment with reference to col. 4 lines 63-64. When taken in context Turner et al. refers to the formation of the coating layer followed by removal of a small portion through etching. Plasma treated is presented as an alternative to etching the surface. This is still a surface treatment yielding a flat surface without walls. The rejection of claim 3 is improperly based on applying a step to structure which would not exist if

the teachings were followed. The rejection is therefore improper.

Regarding claims 4 and 5 the Office argues that the number of wells and ratio of length to width is obvious based on Bisconte. Turner et al. teaches as few layers as possible with each being less than about 0.35 μm thick. If one were to combine these teachings one would not expect a film with a thickness of 0.35 μm thick to support the number of wells and ratio of length to width set forth in claims 4 and 5. If one ignored the teachings of Turner et al. the hydrophobic/hydrophilic combinations would not be available as required in claims 4 and 5 due to dependence from claim 1. The rejection of claims 4 and 5 is improper.

With regard to claim 7 Bisconte is cited as disclosing the use of data/storage tracks on a ribbon device. If one were to combine these teachings one would not expect a film with a thickness of 0.35 μm thick to have sufficient strength to support data storage tracks especially in light of the fact that the films are not sufficient to support impressions without breakage. If one ignored the teachings of Turner et al. the hydrophobic/ hydrophilic combinations would not be available as

required in claim 7 due to dependence from claim 1. The rejection of claim 7 is improper.

Turner et al. is cited as disclosing the use of heat or laser ablation to form the desired pattern of wells and this disclosure is cited as obviating claims 16, 17 and 21. The ablation is taught to remove the thin coating thereby uncovering the thin substrate. There is still no well and no walls to the well. The rejection of claims 16, 17 and 21 is therefore improper. Similarly, claim 19 is rejected based on teachings in Turner et al. directed to the use of masking. Still the result is a very thin, less than 0.35 μm thick, layer. The rejection of claim 19 is improper.

The rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 16, 17, 19 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte(US 4,883,642) in view of Turner et al. (US 5,958,345) is traversed. Notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Claims 2 and 6 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte (US 4,883,642) in

view of Turner et al. (US 5,958,345) and Brown et al. (WO 98/47003).

The combination of Bisconte and Turner et al. has been discussed previously. In summary, one of skill in the art would be lead away from the combination of Bisconte and Turner et al.

Brown et al. is cited as disclosing a substrate device with sample holding wells which are similar to that of the reference Turner et al. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Office points to page 31, lines 20-24 of Brown et al. for teachings regarding the depth and volumes of the chambers. Taught therein are chamber depths of at least 0.05 mm or 50 μm . The Office then opines that it would be obvious to one of skill in the art to determine the optimum depth and/or volume of the sample holding chambers.

As set forth *supra*, Turner et al. teaches a maximum depth of about 0.35 μm . One of skill in the art would have no basis for increasing the depth and would be encouraged not to exceed this depth due to the failure of the device in its intended use at higher thicknesses. Brown et al. teaches a well as small as 50 μm . One of skill in the art would have not basis for

increasing the wall thickness of Turner et al. by more than 100 times that described as being maximum. Contrarily, one of skill in the art would not consider making the wall thickness less than 100th that taught in Brown et al. One of skill in the art would not consider using a holder optimized for x-ray fluorescence as a combinatorial coating except in hindsight based on the present invention. Even if they did there is no indication that the layers of Turner et al. could be coated at over 100 times the thickness or that the layer, if formed, would have a strength sufficient to function as a combinatorial coating. Efforts to determine the proper function would require a considerable amount of research and the cited references lack any teaching which would provide motivation for initiating such research. Turner et al. even states that the number of layers should be maintained at a minimum which would discourage one of skill in the art from even attempting such an experiment.

The hydrophilic/hydrophobic properties of Turner et al. are intended to optimize solvent evaporation in anticipation of x-ray fluorescence studies thereby providing a properly positioned solid sample. (col. 1 lines 6-17) Solvent evaporation is contrary to the intent of Brown et al. and Bisconte et al.

wherein the concentration of reactants during combinatorial reactions is critical.

In summary, Bisconte teaches wells. Brown teaches wells which are at least 50 μm deep. Turner et al. teaches against wells due to the weakness of the material. Furthermore, Turner teaches that the number of layers should be minimized and not thicker than about 0.35 μm . If one relied on Bisconte and Brown they would be led to wells. If they included the teachings of Turner et al. they would be discouraged from using wells. The combination is therefore self contradictory leading one of skill in the art away from attempting such a combination. The position of the Office requires picking elements from separate references which taken together are in conflict to form a combination which is impossible without additional motivation or teaching. No additional motivation or teaching is presented and the rejection is therefore improper.

Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2 and 6 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Brown et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection has been traversed.

Claim 8 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Odernheimer (US 5,216,925).

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed *supra* and all comments are equally applied herein. The Office states that Bisconte and Turner et al. fail to teach the use of barcodes on a web of material and rely on Odernheimer for those teachings which are otherwise lacking in the primary references.

Odernheimer teaches a material of multi-layer construction with a sorptive layer into which the sample penetrates for storage and analysis. It is difficult to determine, even in hindsight, how one of skill in the art would combine such teachings with Bisconte and Turner et al. except by hindsight selection of the barcode only. Barcodes are not new but the incorporation into a product as defined in claim 8 is.

If one were to attempt to incorporate the barcode into the film of Turner et al. it is unlikely to be successful since the film of Turner et al. is so susceptible to tearing. A bar code is expected to be sufficiently rigid to avoid distortion and sufficiently thick to have an optical density high enough for detection by standard detectors. One of skill in the art would

be expected to have difficulty incorporating a rigid, thick, bar code into a film with a minimal number of layers wherein none of the layers exceeds 0.35 μm . Absent some teaching to the contrary one would have no motivation to attempt such a structure and even if attempted they would expect the structural integrity to be insufficient.

If one attempted to combine the bar code with Bisconte et al. they would still be lacking the teachings related to the hydrophilic/hydrophobic areas of the material. Therefore, this combination would not render claim 8 obvious.

If one attempted to combine all three they would be thwarted by the contrary teachings of Bisconte and Turner et al. as set forth previously.

The rejection of claim 8 is based on a hindsight reconstruction which, even in hindsight, would not be expected to provide the present invention even if it could be physically combined.

The rejection of claim 8 as being unpatentable under 35 USC § 103(a) based on the teachings of Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Odernheimer is improper and traversed.

Claim 9 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Ishizaka et al.

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed *supra*. Claim 9 is stated to differ from the combined teachings due to the lack of any teachings to an identifier at the beginning and/or end of the web. Ishizaka et al. is cited as providing teachings directed to the identifier.

The Office cites Fig. 48 of Ishizaka et al. as teaching a leader indicator. Fig. 48 is described in col. 35, lines 36-54 to include a leader tape, 701, made of the same material as the support 211 and the long test film 210 shown in Fig. 11A. Support 211 is more thoroughly described in col. 21, lines 21-35 to have a thickness of approximately 50 μm to 300 μm and more particularly 80 μm to 200 μm . One of skill in the art would anticipate that a thinner film would have insufficient strength to support the magnetic recording layer. One would therefore avoid combining Turner et al. with Ishizaka et al. One would not anticipate the material of Turner et al. to be sufficiently strong to support the magnetic strip since it is incapable of supporting simple physical impressions. Therefore, the

combination of Turner et al. and Ishizaka et al. is impossible except possibly through extensive research.

If one combined Ishizaka et al. and Bisconte et al. they would still be lacking the hydrophobic/hydrophilic properties of claim 9 and therefore the claimed invention would still not be obviated. The inability to incorporate Turner et al. with Bisconte et al. is set forth above and is applied herein equally.

Applicants respectfully contend that claim 9 is patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Ishizaka et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 18 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Naya (JP 11064213).

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed previously and all arguments are equally applicable herein. Bisconte and Turner et al. are stated to lack any recitation of a non-exposed portion of the surface layer being removed. As set forth previously, Bisconte and Turner et al. also fail to lead one to the general structure regardless of the manner used to achieve the general structure. Naya is specific to a sample holder with

a coupling-reactive film whereas both Bisconte and Turner et al. are predominantly inert relative to the materials in contact with the support. One of skill in the art would avoid using a reactive medium when considering either combinatorial plates or sample holders for X-ray fluorescence studies.

One of skill in the art would have no basis for considering the combination of Naya with either of Bisconte or Turner et al. since the reactivity would be considered contrary to the desires of the recited substrate.

We therefore contend that claim 18 is patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Naya under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 20 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Oelbrandt et al. (US 6,033,740) and Birch (US 6,020,026).

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed previously and all arguments apply equally herein. The Office states that claim 20 differs from Bisconte and Turner et al. by reciting that the hydrophobic layer can be applied by non-impact printing.

Oelbrandt et al. is cited as disclosing that it is known in the art to form a pattern of hydrophobic material on a printing substrate by using hydrophobic ink from an ink jet-printing device. As set forth in col. 3 lines 31-33 the layer may vary from 0.2 to 25 μm . This is still insufficient for a combinatorial substrate as set forth in Ishizaka et al. and addressed *supra*.

Birch et al. is cited as teaching that methods for forming printing plates can be applied to the microwell plate manufacturing art. Applicants respectfully submit that Birch has been improperly applied. Birch et al. does not teach that any method for forming printing plates can be applied to the microwell plate manufacturing art. Birch et al. only states that the particular process described therein can be applied. This rejection combines unrelated art which is then argued to include teachings which are not present to make a rejection that is improper.

Claim 20 is patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Oelbrandt et al. and Birch et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 13 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Richardson et al. (US 3,615,437) and Birch et al.

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed previously and all arguments entered previously are equally applicable herein.

Birch et al. is cited as disclosing that methods for forming printing plates can be applied to microwells. This is incorrect as previously set forth.

Richardson is cited as disclosing a flexible metal oxide substrate.

If a metal oxide layer is considered one can not also consider Turner et al. to be applicable. Turner et al. teaches that the layers must be less than 0.35 μm thick and plastic. If Turner excludes metal supports and Richardson requires metal supports how can this combination of references be considered in combination? Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Bisconte, Turner et al., Richardson and Birch et al. is impossible to make and that the combination can only be made in hindsight in an attempt to select teachings which recite

a single element from the claimed invention without regard for the manner in which the art is cited.

Claim 13 is patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Richardson et al. and Birch et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is improperly based on a hindsight reconstruction of the art which can not be combined as recited. The rejection is improper and traversed.

Claims 22 and 23 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and either of Chateau (US 4,071,315) or Kolehmainen et al. (US 4,349,510).

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed previously and the comments are equally applicable herein.

Chateau and Kolehmainen et al. are cited as disclosing the structure of the automated system. Even with this teaching the holder is not taught and neither Chateau nor Kolehmainen et al. provide guidance leading one towards the claimed holder.

Kolehmainen et al. even teaches against the teachings of Turner et al. since the wells are specifically stated to be from 1 to 25 mm deep. One of skill in the art would not be inclined

to rely on the teachings of Turner et al. wherein a minimum number of layers with each being less than about 0.35 μm is required.

Claims 22 and claim 23 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and either of Chateau (US 4,071,315) or Kolehmainen et al. (US 4,349,510) under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claims 15, 27-29, 31, 34, 35, 38 and 59-61 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Goodwin Jr. (US 5,210,021).

Bisconte and Turner et al. have been discussed previously and all arguments previously presented are equally applicable herein.

Goodwin, Jr. is cited as disclosing a substrate with sample holding zones on two sides of a flexible substrate using a hydrophobic material. The Office therefore argues that it would be obvious to include hydrophobic materials on both sides of a support.

Goodwin, Jr. is specific to a material wherein reactant migrates through the substrate. This is contrary to both Bisconte and Turner et al. Goodwin, Jr. fails to mitigate the deficiencies of the primary references and fails to provide any guidance whereby the contradictory teachings of Bisconte and Turner et al. could be combined.

Claims 15, 27-29, 31, 34, 45, 38 and 59-61 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al. and Goodwin, Jr. under 35 USC §103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claims 26 and 30 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin Jr. and Brown et al.

Each reference has been discussed previously and all previous comments are equally applicable herein.

Bisconte and Turner et al. do not disclose that the substrate is a flexible polymeric material, a flexible metal or metal oxide e.g an aluminium foil having a top layer of aluminum oxide applied by electrochemical oxidation.

Brown teaches that the chambers have a depth of 0.05 mm as set forth previously. If this teaching is considered than Turner

et al. can not be applied for forming the wells since Turner et al. teaches that the coating thickness must be less than about 0.35 μm and that there should be as few layers as possible. Therefore, one of skill in the art would have no basis for combining Brown and Turner et al. since the teachings are mutually exclusive and lead one of skill in the art in opposite directions.

If either Brown or Turner et al. are excluded the rejection is improper since critical elements are not taught.

Claims 26 and 30 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin Jr. and Brown et al under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 32 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin Jr. and Odernheimer (US 5,216,925).

Each reference has been discussed previously and the comments are equally applicable herein.

In summary, Bisconte and Turner et al. fail to teach the basic construction as set forth in claim 15 and therefore claim 32 by dependence. Goodwin Jr. teaches a dual sided holder

wherein material passes through the media. This is contrary to both Bisconte and Turner et al. Odernheimer teaches a barcode but this would not be expected to be combinable with Turner et al. due to the expected fragile nature of the Turner et al. material.

Claim 32 is patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin et al. and Ordenheimer et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 33 was previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin Jr. and Ishizaka et al. (US 5,077,010).

Each reference has been discussed previously and the comments are equally applicable herein.

In summary, Bisconte and Turner et al. fail to teach the basic construction as set forth in claim 15 and therefore claim 33 by dependence. Goodwin Jr. teaches a dual sided holder wherein material passes through the media. This is contrary to both Bisconte and Turner et al.

Ishizaka et al. teaches a web of material with a leader indicator, however, the substrate is thick by comparison with

Turner et al. and could not be made with the layers of Turner et al. as proposed and refuted previously herein.

Claim 33 is patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin et al. and Ishizaka et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claims 36 and 37 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin Jr., Richardson et al. (US 3,615,437) and Birch et al. (US 6,020,026).

Each reference has been discussed previously as has each combination of references. In summary, the references are either in conflict with each other and could not be used in combination or they lead one of skill in the art in directions away from the claimed invention. The collection of references clearly indicates a hind-sight attempt to withdraw one element from each reference to render an opinion of obviouness without regard for the context within which the element resides. The rejection is improper for the reasons set forth *supra* and notice thereof is anticipated.

Claims 36 and 37 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Richardson et al. and Birch et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claims 62 and 63 were previously rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., Goodwin Jr. and either Chateau (US 4,071,315) or Kolehmainen et al. (US 4,349,510).

Bisconte, Turner et al. and Goodwin Jr. fail to teach the holder of the claimed invention for the reasons set forth herein which are applicable to this rejection equally.

The inapplicability of Chateau and Kolehmainen have been discussed previously and those arguments apply to this rejection equally.

Claims 62 and 63 are patentable over Bisconte in view of Turner et al., and either Chateau et al. or Kolehmainen et al. under 35 USC § 103(a). The rejection is traversed.

Claims 1-9, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22 and 23 were previously rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 3-10,

14 and 16-20 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,783,735 in view of Turner et al. (US 5,958,345).

The present application is a continuation of U.S. Pat. No. 6,783,735. The issued claims are directed to a web material for combinatorial coating having specific size and height parameters.

The presently claimed invention is directed to a web material or combinatorial coatings having specific compositions. The compositions can be utilized without the specified sizes of the '735 Patent and the size and height parameters of the '735 Patent can be used without the compositions of the present application. The size and composition are not obviated by each other and therefore represent separate and distinct inventions.

Turner et al. is specific to a holder for x-ray diffraction wherein the layers are no more than 0.35 μm thick and the sample is applied is a solvent. Turner et al. teaches against a thickness above about 0.35 μm since the data collection would be compromised. Turner et al. also teaches against a formed well since they are susceptible to tearing. One of skill in the art would therefore avoid using wells, based on the teachings of Turner et al., and would instead use 0.35 μm coatings with a

minimal number of coatings being used. One of skill in the art would be lead away from applying Turner et al. to achieve the wells of the '735 Patent.

The rejection of claims 1-9, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22 and 23 under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1, 3-10, 14 and 16-20 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,783,735 in view of Turner et al. (US 5,958,345) is improper since Turner et al. teaches against the claimed invention.

Allowed Claims

Claims 24 and 25 were previously in condition for allowance. No rejections were entered. Claim 24 has been amended to independent form thereby rendering claims 24 and 25 into condition for allowance.

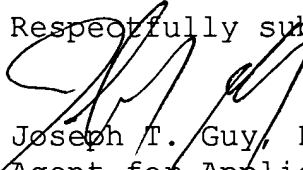
Alternatively, no new issues have been raised and any subsequent rejection must be considered a first action on the merits.

CONCLUSIONS

Claims 1-9, 13, 15-38 and 59-63 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Notice thereof is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



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